

Brother's' John Sayles Talks

video

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JULY 1985

The #1 Magazine of Home Video

Private Eyes *Camera-Camcorder Buyer's Special*

Secret Agent Man
Patrick McGoochan Probe

Dateline: Taiwan
The Soul of a New TV





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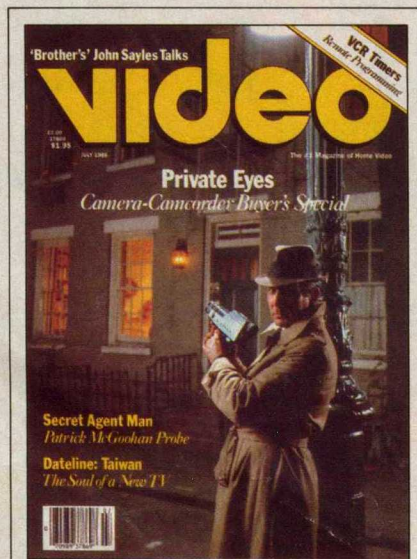
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About the Cover. Pssst. Mac. Got a low-light? Thanks. Careful—they've got camcorders. They might come out shooting. Cover photo by Tom Weihs.

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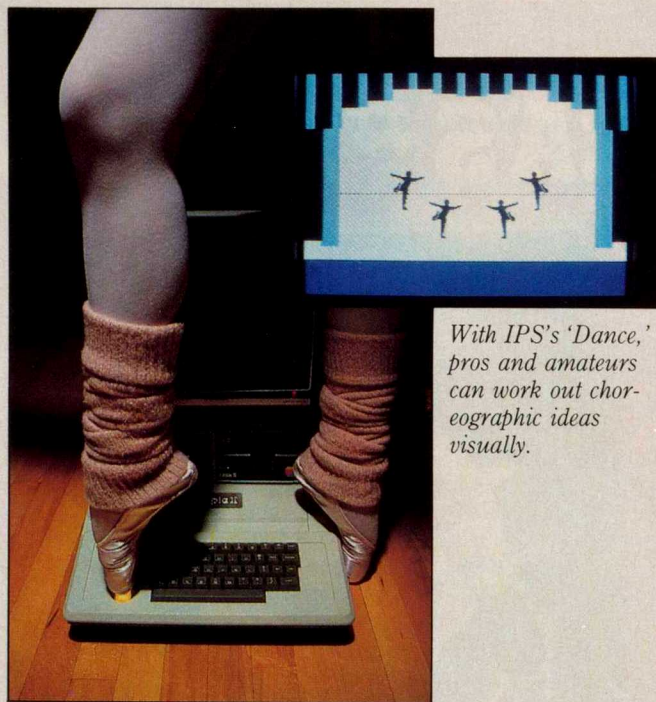
Last year, Interactive Picture Systems' no-nonsense approach to computer entertainment brought us *Movie Maker*, a program designed for amateur and professional animators. So it comes as no surprise that this month IPS enters yet another cultural domain with a program called *Dance*.

IPS likes to refer to *Dance* as "a sketching tool" for choreographers. But like *Movie Maker*, *Dance* is geared to appeal to both the time-conscious professional artist and the easily discouraged beginner.

Though *Dance* was unavailable in completed form at presstime, the version I saw was love at first sight.

The notation of dance has plagued many a dancer. Not even George Balanchine could offer much solace to the choreographic world before his death. His dances could actually die, and his steps could be forgotten from one generation to the next. *Dance* doesn't pretend to be the answer to the difficulties of notating movements. Its goals are much more modest—to provide a system that allows choreographers to play with ideas outside their bodies. But at the same time, the program promises to make record-keeping of dance movements graphic, visual, and permanent. *Dance* provides a clean, spontaneous way of working out choreographic ideas visually. Instead of calling in four or five dancers, or spending hours sketching movements in their various phases, the choreographer can turn on a computer, flick *Dance* into the rehearse mode, and begin to play.

Here's how it works. The



With IPS's 'Dance,' pros and amateurs can work out choreographic ideas visually.

program is based on 20 movement phrases taken from a variety of dance forms: ballet, modern, jazz, even breakdance. A "movement phrase" refers to a combination of steps that make up one cohesive movement. For example, a knee bend to a kick to a 360-degree turn to a jump in place might make up one full movement phrase. These are only four steps, and some of the movement phrases in the program combine up to as many as 12 steps. *Dance* gives you the freedom to rehearse and perform from one to five dancers at a time using these movements. So a choreographer can experiment with a jazzy phrase in the midst of a classical ballet routine, block it out with a couple of animated computer dancers, and see if it works.

The beginner dancer/choreographer will appreciate IPS's intuitive, rather than instructional, approach to learn

choreography techniques. The small manual that comes with the program gives you the basic outline of movements possible just so you can get the dancers around the stage, but after that *Dance* leaves you pretty much to your own devices.

Dance's figures are set up as though they are being watched from the second-row balcony—according to IPS founder Guy Nouri, the best seat in the house. From here you choose the music and lighting that simulates either stage or studio. *Dance* is compatible on the Commodore 64, Atari, and the Apple sans music. The program is available this month from Spinnaker for about \$30.

—Julia Lisella

Seeing-Eye Micro

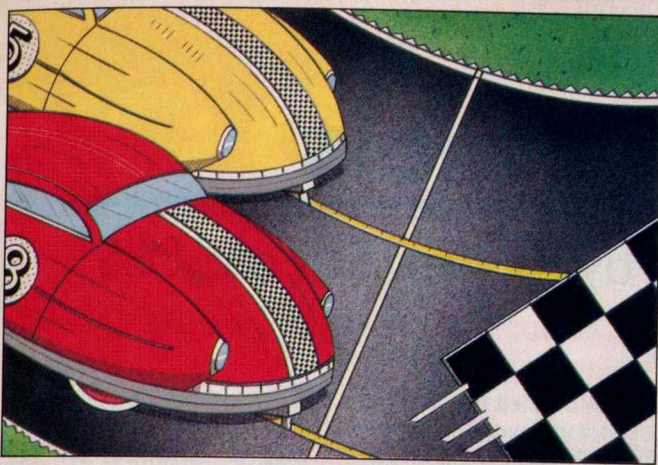
If you're one of those vain people who's wasted countless quarters on computer portraits at your local arcade or tourist trap, MacVision is

the high-tech toy you've probably been waiting for. When connected to the Apple Macintosh, the new peripheral from Koala Industries digitizes photographic images taken by a video camera (or from sources like VCRs and videodisc players) and lets you print them out in black & white pixel fashion. The image first appears on the display, allowing you to touch it up (using *MacPaint*) and position it until you're ready to save and print it out.

MacVision is an expensive toy—for \$349 you get the interface module and software. Add this to the cost of the Mac itself and a video camera and you're talking \$3000. Less pricey, yet in the same ballpark, is *Computereyes*, a "video acquisition system" for the Commodore 64 and Apple II series computers from Digital Vision. For \$129 you basically get the same package, and for another \$220 Digital will throw in an Ikegami video camera. To manipulate the image, however, you'll have to add on a drawing system like *Flex-Draw*, *Doodle!*, or *Koala Pad*.

Both products appear to be gadgets mostly intended for hours of mugging in front of the camera. But Koala would prefer us to believe otherwise. Some of the applications the company suggests include adding photos to memos, newsletters, manuals; introducing new employees or products to others in the office (or even elsewhere via modem); or creating jazzy customized greeting cards at home. Fine, but here's a prediction: some enterprising "visionary" is going to set up a Mac shop and charge small change for digitizing your face.

—Steve Bloom



Racing Destruction Set

Electronic Arts/Commodore 64

Here's an idea. Who hasn't wanted one of those elaborate slot-car sets with hundreds of pieces of track, the kind you see set up in department stores and hobby shops? You know, the ones with the 13-year-olds zipping the tiny cars right off the tracks in the curves? Remember? Looked like fun, didn't it?

OK. Take all the elements of a great little slot-car set. Now add jumps, ramps, various kinds of track surfaces, lots of vehicles with different engines and handling characteristics. Oddball scenery. How 'bout the surface of the moon? Arm the vehicles. Oil cans to throw out the window. Land mines to drop in your trail. Change the laws of gravity.

Whoa! Change the laws of gravity? All right. So this thing is really a nifty computer game crammed onto both sides of a floppy disk.

Racing Destruction Set is the program that lets you play like a kid in the privacy of your home or office without fear of reprisal. (And you don't even need a teenager. You can race against

the computer if you want.) You can simulate the most complex slot-car track in the world, assembling one full of hills and drops from a kit of parts. Then you can launch your on-screen vehicle, sailing it through the air by hitting the ramp just right. Set up head-on collision situations, roll the car over on its roof, rear-end the moron in front of you—all the things you've dreamt about while stuck in a freeway traffic jam.

There are two separate windows so that you can track the progress of the other car (or land rover, or motorcycle), and you control the vehicles by kind of sliding them around with the joysticks. If you don't want to build and tune up your own track layout, there are 50 prefabs on the disk ranging from a demo track (for jerks and sissies) to a goofy one labeled KILLER, designed to make your joystick hand swell up to the size of an outfielder's mitt. For the white-wine set there are some faithful (or so we're told) replicas of European Grand Prix tracks. But why defeat the purpose? *Racing Destruction Set* is all about stupid adolescent fun.

—Tim Onosko

Robot Wars

As long as robots are taking over our factories, they might as well fight our wars too, right? Perhaps, but don't expect to see androids in the trenches until early in the next century. This conclusion was reached by International Resource Development, a research firm that just issued the report, "Artificial Intelligence & Robotics in Military and Paramilitary

Markets."

"The U.S. military has become increasingly interested in the potential for battlefield robots," says the report. "There are some nasty tasks—including mine clearing, robotic ammunition handling, and sentry patrol—which can be done by robots constructed using today's state-of-the-art robotic technology. But it will probably be many decades—if it ever

happens—before land warfare will be fought entirely by mechanized robots."

The reason, according to the report, is that "existing computer technology, architecture, and software does not even come close to providing the capacity, speed, and flexibility combined with light weight, small package size, and low power consumption that will be required by artificial intelligence/robotics (AI/R) systems being planned." Today, less than \$200 million is being spent on military AI/R;

by 1994, IRD predicts, that figure will rise to \$1.5 billion.

Other problems included:

- The limited usefulness of sentry/patrol androids until "high orders" of on-board intelligence become available at affordable prices.
- The nationwide shortage of people with specific robotics and artificial-intelligence expertise.
- The concern that a clever enemy may employ countermeasures and even "turn" a military robot and make it operate against its "master."

—Steve Bloom

The Marriage Program

If nothing else, computers love to make predictions about anything, from the truly serious (for example, when the Great Earthquake is going to jar Los Angeles) to the truly frivolous (Bud Goode's guesses about which team is going to win the Super Bowl every year). Now one claims to prognosticate whether your marriage is going to last. Two University of

Miami researchers have developed a program that asks questions like, "How do you react when you come home happy and your partner says something nasty?" The computer apparently does an exhaustive search (four billion possible interactions) that helps interpret whether you and your spouse will be compatible in 20 years or headed for Splitsville. We're sure the program is bound to cause a couple of marital spats. 

BEST SELLERS/HOME

1. **Print Shop.** AP, C64, AT. Broderbund.
2. **Dollars & Sense.** AP, APc, IBM, MAC, TIP. Monogram.
3. **Print Shop Graphics Library.** AP. Broderbund.
4. **Newsroom.** AP. Springboard.
5. **Bank Street Writer.** AP, APc, IBM, C64, AT. Broderbund.
6. **Managing Your Money.** IBM. MECA.
7. **ClickArt Effects.** MAC. T/Maker.
8. **Home Acct.** AP, APc, IBM, MAC, PCjr, C64, AT, EPS. Arrays/Cont.
9. **Music Works.** MAC. Hayden Software.
10. **Homeword.** AP, IBM, C64, AT. Sierra On-Line.

BEST SELLERS/RECREATION

1. **Flight Simulator II.** AP, C64, AT. Sublogic.
2. **Microsoft Flight Simulator.** IBM. Microsoft.
3. **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.** MAC, C64, AT, AP, IBM. Infocom.
4. **Sargon III.** AP, IBM, MAC, C64. Hayden Software.
5. **Lode Runner.** AP, IBM, MAC, C64, AT. Broderbund.
6. **Zork I.** AP, IBM, MAC, AT, CP/M, DEC, TIP. Infocom.
7. **Karateka.** AP. Broderbund.
8. **Wizardry.** AP, IBM. Sir-Tech Software.
9. **Ultima III.** AP, IBM, C64, AT. Origin Systems.
10. **King's Quest.** APc, IBM. Sierra On-Line.

LEGEND: AP = Apple, APc = Apple IIc, APe = Apple IIe, AT = Atari, C64 = Commodore 64, COM = Commodore Pet/CBM, CP/M = 5 1/4" and 8" formats, DEC = DEC Rainbow, EPS = Epson QX-10, IBM = IBM-PC, MAC = Apple Macintosh, PCjr = IBM PCjr, TIP = Texas Instruments Professional, TRS = TRS-80, VIC = Commodore Vic-20, VTR = Victor 9000, WNG = Wang Personal Computer, ZEN = Zenith 100.

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